

The world in a shopping mall



The first article, "The World in a Shopping Mall" clearly shows that, since the first enclosed shopping mall opened in the United States in 1956, the need for consumption has grown greater and greater. There are very few places left in the United States where there isn't a mall or shopping center within a 5-mile radius and most people spend time in a mall at least once a week. Americans are consuming more and more, and not necessarily because they have higher incomes or greater needs; consumption has become second nature.

These days, a large part of the lives of many Americans is shopping or spending time in a mall. Malls and consumption have replaced other activities, such as reading, getting together with friends, spending time with family, and hobbies. Teenagers use malls as a place to hang out, meet the opposite sex, and of course, shop. When trying to decide how to spend a day off or a weekend, many people turn to shopping. In many ways, the increase in consumption of material goods can be seen in the increase in consumption of fast-food, as evidence by Americans ever-expanding waists.

The fast-food phenomenon must have something to do with shopping malls, as well, as any place where there are a wide variety of stores there are sure to be a wide variety of fast-food chains, as well. Shopping malls, as evidenced by the Mall of America or the West Edmonton Mall, have become increasingly more complex, expansive, and 'all-inclusive'. As the title, 'The World in a Shopping Mall' suggests, many shopping malls now house so many shops and services (such as apartments, spas, food stores, etc. that one could theoretically live, work, eat, sleep, and socialize all without ever having to step foot outside a mall.

The second article, ' Millennium Park aligns city with consumption economy' only furthers the argument that Americans have come to base their lives upon consumption. In this case, the consumption is of a different variety, specifically an " entertainment addition and a destination spot for Chicagoans and visitors. " Once again, it becomes clear that in order for " Chicagoans and visitors" to entertain themselves in a city such as Chicago, they need a \$475-million park.

Perhaps the worst part of both of these articles is that they are true, that consumerism in the United States has grown out of control and that people no longer treasure or enjoy what they already have, if not seek out more things that they don't need. Millennium Park in Chicago is an excellent example of this; Chicago is a large city with a great deal of historical spots, monuments, museums and other attractions. It is a city that has a very interesting and thriving Polish community, among others, and a city that is very culturally diverse.

In place of taking advantage of all of this, people would rather go to an overly expensive, controversial, and fake entertainment complex. The same happens in nearly every city in the United States. Additionally, Americans have now thrown this trend on places such as Europe, where consumption, although it has no doubt risen, has not reached such proportions as in the United States. Nonetheless, because Americans are wealthy tourists, they have caused places such as Florence to trade in their history and essentially become shopping centers.